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ANNUAL REPORT

To December 31, 1881.

TO THE MEMBERS OF

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

The Trustees of the Association for the term ending December 31st, 1881, respectfully report :

In May last the date of the annual meeting of the Corporation was changed, by amendment of the Constitution, with intent that the Annual Report of the Trustees might hereafter coincide with the Annual Report from January to December required by the Department of Parks, in the lease of the Museum-building.

This report, therefore, covers the transactions of only two-thirds of a year, from the date of the last Annual Report, May 1, to the close of the year 1881.

The receipts during the period have been as follows :

Cash on hand May 1st, 1881.....	\$ 666 55
Subscriptions to General Fund, paid.....	58,835 00
Annual Subscriptions.....	700 00
Exhibition, Entrance-money.....	2,446 75
Sales of Hand-books.....	2,215 40
Photograph-sales.....	10 75
Department of Public Parks : on account of Maintenance....	6,148 83
Industrial Art-Schools : receipts for Maintenance.....	2,768 66
Donations toward Periodicals for Library.....	75 00
	<u>\$73,861 94</u>

The disbursements have been as follows :

General Expenses.....	\$12,438 68
Maintenance.....	3,944 68
Hand-books.....	1,826 08
Printing and Stationery.....	377 88
Interest.....	2,323 17
Borrowed Money paid off.....	17,893 18
Library : Maintenance.....	241 00
Industrial Art-Schools : Maintenance.....	2,928 66
Marquand Collection of Antique Glass.....	15,000 00
Johnston Collection of Engraved Gems.....	6,000 00
P. J. Clays : Painting.....	6,000 00
Cash on hand, Dec. 31, 1881.....	4,888 59
	<u>\$73,861 94</u>

The total subscriptions to the funds of the Museum, including endowment, up to May 1st, 1881, were \$400,754.80. The total subscriptions since that date have been \$58,835.

The financial condition of the Museum will appear from the following statement :

Works of Art purchased and presented up to May 1, 1881...	\$458,908 08
Works of Art purchased this year	27,000 00
Works of Art presented and bequeathed this year.....	67,595 00
Art-School Endowment-fund.....	50,000 00
Library Endowment-fund.....	2,000 00
Cash on hand.....	4,888 59
	\$610,391 67

Indebtedness:

Balance due on purchases.....	16,000 00
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From this statement it will be seen that on Dec. 31, 1881, the indebtedness of the institution was \$16,000, and its cash balance, \$4,888.49. By subscriptions received in January, the entire debt has been paid. The Members of the Museum have reason to congratulate themselves on its sound financial condition. They possess property, and are exhibiting for the instruction of the public, works of art, which their private generosity has gathered, whose value in money, estimated at cost, is upwards of \$600,000; and they owe no debt of any kind but grateful acknowledgment to one another of the cordial unanimity and determination of purpose which have led to their present condition of prosperity.

On the 23d day of November, 1869, a meeting of gentlemen in this city, considered the subject of forming a Museum of Art; and appointed a committee to devise measures toward the accomplishment of this object. The committee had the matter in charge in the winter of 1869-70, and the result of their labors was the assurance of abundant co-operation in the work of establishing this institution. On the 13th of April, 1870, The Metropolitan Museum of Art was incorporated, and on the 14th of May, in that year, was organized by the adoption of a constitution and the election of officers. Addresses were then issued, inviting others to become associated with the membership, and announcing the purposes of the institution. The first paragraph of the report of a select committee to the Executive Committee, which was then

adopted and issued to the public as the first published paper of the Museum, was in these words:

“The Metropolitan Museum of Art should be based on the “idea of a more or less complete collection of objects illustrative “of the History of Art, from the earliest beginnings to the present time.”

This statement, declaring in a few words the whole scope and design of the institution, has been the guiding principle of our labors from the beginning.

A temporary location having been taken at No. 681 Fifth Avenue, the first public exhibition of the Museum of Art was opened on the 21st day of February, 1872.

The annual meeting at which the Trustees present this report to the Members is held on the 13th day of February, 1882, in the Central Park Building; and, instead of reporting in detail the results of ten brief years of hearty, united efforts of the Members of the Museum, they may content themselves with the familiar epitaph of a great architect, resting in the cathedral he constructed, “*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*”

Since the last Annual Report, important additions have been made to our collections.

The manufacture and sale of glass has become an increasing department of American industry and commerce. The history of the fabric is of the first interest among the useful and ornamental arts. Whether glass was first made by Phœnicians, as has been generally supposed, or by Egyptians, as some very ancient examples seem to indicate, the art is one of the oldest which has been handed down from ancient to modern civilizations; and its products illustrate with great force the varying tastes and abilities of different nations. The Museum was fortunate in acquiring, among the Cypriote antiquities, a very large and superb series of illustrations of ancient glass, of Phœnician, Grecian and Roman work. It had also a few specimens of Egyptian glass. Our collections thus illustrated the earliest known practice of the art, and its continuous products down to the Roman period.

During the past year Mr. Henry G. Marquand, one of the Trustees, has enabled the Museum to acquire, at a cost of \$15,000

a collection of Grecian, Roman and Mediæval glass, which admirably continues the historical sequence in the art. While this collection alone is of great interest and value, it possesses and confers large additional illustrative importance by being brought into connection with the Cypriote Collection already in the Museum, and also into relation with another valuable acquisition illustrating the later history of the fabric.

Mr. James Jackson Jarves, during the last summer, presented to the Museum his own valuable collection of glass, made with care and judgment, and comprising a series of very beautiful illustrations of the revived art at Murano (Venice) and its achievements in Europe down to modern times. Mr. Jarves has made this generous gift with motives which ought to be known and felt by American lovers of art. He states in a published article (in *Harper's Magazine*, for January, 1882) his conviction that persons who are able to do so, should form collections, on systematic plans, in special departments of art, and place these collections where they will do most good, in public Museums. It is in accordance with this view that he has deposited his glass with us. "Another reason," he adds, "which induced me to give the glass, is that my father, Mr. Deming Jarves, of Boston, who died in 1869, was perhaps the first man to introduce into America the manufacture of flint-glass on a large scale. * * * Besides adding to the collections of the Museum, it seemed to me also a fitting tribute to his memory, and an act which would have been grateful to him were he living."

The addition of the two collections to the previous possessions of the Museum, enables us to illustrate the history of the manufacture of glass, with few interruptions, from the invention of the art down to our own day. The series of examples will undoubtedly be largely increased, and the deficiencies supplied in the future. Specimens of Saracenic work, of Byzantine and Mediæval Mosaics and illustrations of the history of stained glass in windows are now much to be desired.

By the gift of \$6,000 from the President, Mr. John Taylor Johnston, the Museum has been able to acquire, within the year, the Collection of Engraved Gems made by Rev. C. W. King, of Trinity College, Cambridge, England, whose published works on

Glyptic Art are among the highest known authorities. This collection includes examples, 331 in number, of Asiatic, Egyptian, Grecian, Roman and a very few Modern European gems; and, having been catalogued and described by Mr. King himself, forms one of the best possible contributions to the art-treasures of the Museum.

These also acquire value to us from the fact that, besides a number of Egyptian engraved stones and pottery seals presented heretofore by Mr. Joseph W. Drexel, and a collection of Asiatic engraved cylinders, purchased two years ago, we already possessed among the Kurium treasures, a collection of ancient gems of very great value, among which are some of the most important examples of Glyptic Art now known. These also have been catalogued and described by Mr. King, whose opinion—that their discovery amounts to a revelation of the art in its rise and progress, from the earliest times down to the Fifth century before the Christian era—has been published heretofore.

The combined collections furnish for the first time to American students an excellent series of examples of the art, from its beginnings through successive ages down to our own.

Mr. Joseph W. Drexel has presented to us a fine collection of gold, silver and bronze coins, from Egypt, which, it is hoped, will form the nucleus of that much desired acquisition—an illustrative numismatic collection.

Mr. Alphonse Duprat has enriched us by the gift of a series of casts of Ivory Carvings, which, next to the possession of the originals, now scattered in Museums and private collections of Europe, will be the best possible aid to students. Ivories are the only or chief surviving examples of many periods of art-history. They are of special importance in exhibiting the skill of artists, and the tastes of cultivated minds in Mediæval Europe. They are among the most rare and costly relics of art; and no museum can hope to acquire a full series of original examples of the art which these casts illustrate.

Among the most interesting works of historic character acquired during the past year are two bronze crabs, presented to the Museum by Commander Gorringe. These crabs formerly stood, with two others now lost, at the corners of the base of the

Alexandria Obelisk, which now occupies its place in Central Park near the Museum Building. They were the work of the Romans, who transferred the obelisk from its original site at Heliopolis to Alexandria. One of them bears an inscription recording the event of that transfer in the XVIIIth year of the Emperor Augustus.

Mr. Paul Jean Clays, Mr. H. Le Roy, and several gentlemen in this city, united in providing means for the purchase of an oil-painting by Mr. Clays, the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the freedom of the port of Antwerp, which has been received and placed in the gallery.

Other important gifts to our collections are mentioned in a list annexed to this report.

Brief as have been the ten years since the opening of our first exhibition, the Members of this Museum have been not infrequently admonished that we are working for the generations to come after us, and that those who have accomplished what has hitherto been done, must hand over the work of continuation to successors. The Trustees record, with sincere sorrow, the death of their late associate, Mr. S. Whitney Phoenix, who has been a steadfast assistant in the labors of past years. Mr. Phoenix was an intelligent and accomplished lover of art. In his private life he had, with good taste and keen appreciation, surrounded himself with beautiful objects in various departments of art, and by his last will, bequeathed his collections to the Museum. These include a variety of ivories, silver, oriental lacquers, embroideries, bronzes, paintings, and rare objects of art, which will amount to an estimated money-value of at least \$50,000. These have been received at the Museum, but so near the close of the year, that it is impossible, in this report, to give a detailed description of them. The Trustees hope, in future, to be able to make such permanent arrangements for their exhibition as will make them an enduring monument to their donor, and of his attachment to the institution.

Turning from the record of what has been done, the Trustees ask the attention of the Members to what lies before us to be done. Past success justifies hope, but does not assure future prosperity. We are rich in treasures of art, but have no income provided, wherewith to preserve them, and to continue our work in the future.

Every day increases the pressure of our labor as Trustees from the increased necessity for economy, and the inability to expend money for what seems to be actual daily need of the institution.

The increase of our property demands an increase of watchmen, and other expenses in caring for it. The location of the Museum at a distance from the central and business parts of the city, adds numerous small expenses to the work, which, in the year, amount to a large sum.

The Trustees have been deeply impressed with the importance of placing all the valuable possessions of the Museum in a thorough condition of repair, and are now engaged in an examination of each of the many thousand objects of the Museum-collections. No work of human art is imperishable. We cannot arrest the progress of decay in works ancient or modern. Repairs and restorations are a never-ceasing duty and subject of expense in museums. In European museums, with ample means, it is the practice, on acquiring objects, to repair, and where necessary restore them; and afterward keep them in constant repair. In our climate, and especially in the location of our building, it is probable that more expense will always be necessary in this direction than in European museums, but it is certain that future expense will be saved by doing the work thoroughly now. Oil-paintings, which are in danger of ruin from the cracking, blistering and scaling off of surfaces, must be restored by experienced hands, with the supervision of artists. Sculptures must be treated variously, according to the character of the stone. Potteries, porcelains and glass must be repaired, when broken, by skilled repairers. Bronzes, which oxidize rapidly in our climate, demand a treatment which should be subject of careful experiment and study.

Last year we called attention to the condition of some of our valuable paintings; and we again direct attention to the fact that the peculiarities of climate, or of location, have produced an effect on them which can only be remedied by placing them at once in the hands of competent restorers. They suffered greatly in Fourteenth Street, and the progress of deterioration has not been arrested by removal to the Park Building.

While we occupied a hired house in Fourteenth Street, there was neither place nor means for the work necessary to permanent

preservation of objects of any kind. The antiquities, especially the sculptures in calcareous stone, which had been there temporarily repaired and restored, suffered severely from exposure. When these were removed to the Park Building, in 1879, the entire collection was carefully cleaned, the temporary restorations were removed, with the exception of six or eight which escaped notice, and the whole were placed in tight glass cases. Thus far, very slight disintegration is visible on sculptured surfaces, but it is evident that it progresses more rapidly on exposed surfaces of fractures. Unrepaired objects, which have been left exposed, show the rapid progress of surface disintegration by the constant falling from them of fine, white dust. The British Museum, and other European museums, have adopted the plan of filling in fractured cavities and otherwise replacing broken portions of the Cypriote objects in calcareous stone, as well as many Grecian and Roman sculptures.

The inscription tablet No. 16, in our collection, and the large Greek Vase No. 4789, both of which were restored by Mr. Ready, who has charge of British Museum work of this class, illustrate what should be done with many objects otherwise fragmentary and liable to perish. The Trustees, however, having no means at their disposal, have contented themselves with repairs, leaving fractured surfaces exposed, and the sculptures, some 1,200 in number, with the exceptions mentioned, are left without the proper restorations, which should be made, if we expect to preserve and perpetuate their usefulness to our successors.

The Trustees endeavored, in 1879, to secure the services of Mr. Ready in treating the bronzes of the Kurium collection, but failed. They made cautious experiments, and after these allowed the treatment of a few objects by a process which, up to the present time, appears to have been successful in arresting oxidation. But the larger part of our bronzes remain exposed to the effects of our atmosphere and must soon receive attention, or be irretrievably damaged. The grand results which the British Museum has attained in the cleaning, repairing and restoring of such works as the superb bronzes of the Balawat Gates, indicate the importance of obtaining, if possible, a similar treatment of our

small, but very ancient and valuable collection of bronzes from the Kurium Temple.

A few of our ancient potteries have been repaired and restored, and the collection is in excellent condition.

One or two exceedingly interesting specimens not exhibited await the hands of such skilled workmen as are employed in the European museums, a specimen of whose ability is seen in the large Greek Vase before mentioned.

The subject is now receiving the careful consideration of the Trustees and they are advising with American artists and are in correspondence with the British, South Kensington, Louvre, and Berlin Museums, as to the principles and practice of those museums. No question of theoretical restoration is involved in the subject. It is the object of this Museum to obtain information and adopt such rules, in accordance with the best judgment and fullest experience of older museums, as may enable us to preserve in the best way for permanent exhibition, the perishable objects of ancient art which have been entrusted in our care.

A full, complete and accurate catalogue, describing every article in the Museum, where obtained, its material and character noting repairs and restorations, if any, is one of the pressing demands of the Museum, for which the funds at our disposal are wholly inadequate. The system of brief Hand-books designed to guide visitors and give condensed information, has occupied all the available time of the Director and his assistants, as well as of several Trustees who have given their personal aid in this work. New acquisitions have made and will continue to make new hand-books necessary, and as these are of more immediate and practical importance to the visiting public, the general catalogue has given way to them.

The Trustees have directed attention to these subjects as illustrations of the pressing need they are under of a largely increased annual income. That which we have is precarious. If it were assuredly doubled, the amount would not more than suffice for the proper expenses of the institution, in taking care of, preserving and exhibiting the art-objects we possess. Every additional acquisition adds to these expenditures, and increases the labor of Trustees in devising economies and cutting down

outlays which ought to be made in the proper administration of the Museum.

The Library should be a subject of special interest to Members, and contributions of books will be valued. The Trustees acknowledge with thanks the donation by Mr. Heber R. Bishop of \$2,000 to a fund, the income of which is to be used for the Library. The necessity for a large increase in this department for the use of visitors and students as well as for the work of the Museum in the preparation of hand-books and catalogues, should receive consideration. Annexed hereto will be found a statement of the periodicals now received by the Library.

The Art-Schools of the Museum are in successful progress, under the general management of Mr. John Buckingham. As this report closes in mid-winter and covers only the latter part of the last year, the account of expense of the Art-Schools cannot be made complete. The actual expenditures during the period have been \$2,928.68, toward which the income of the \$50,000 endowment fund was \$1,041.66.

The Trustees have taken a lease of the upper floors of the building, Nos. 214 and 216 East Thirty-fourth Street, which include rooms well adapted for our purposes at an annual rental of \$1,750.

The endowment-fund of \$50,000 affords but a part of the income necessary for the expense of the schools; but the good already accomplished has been so marked, and the need of the schools so manifest, the Trustees have determined to place the work, if possible, on a permanent basis. They have commenced a system of Technical Education, not in what is commonly called Fine Art, but in art which shall be useful to manufacturing artisans, and expand the art-knowledge, especially of apprentices and workmen needing cultivation. It is hoped that persons interested in different trades will organize, and existing Trade Guilds will come forward and establish classes in their respective lines of production. Such classes are especially needed in the designing of silver and bronze work and work in iron, brass and other metals, and possibly in the mechanical work of light forged iron. The class in Carriage Construction may be instanced as an example. The Committee of the Carriage Builders' National Association has

continued its relations with the Museum Schools, and it is hoped this relation will be permanent. It is our aim to provide the best teachers in all departments, especially qualified by practical knowledge of the trades in which they teach.

The classes at present are as follows :

NIGHT CLASS IN MODELING AND CARVING.

MR. JOSEPH SMITH, Instructor. Number of pupils on roll, 27. Gratifying progress of pupils is reported in Renaissance and Gothic Ornament, and in Busts and Flowers.

NIGHT CLASS IN CARRIAGE-DRAFTING AND CONSTRUCTION.

MR. JOHN D. GRIBBON, Instructor: MR. JOHN C. HOURAD, Assistant. Pupils on roll, 44. Excellent work is reported in full-size working drafts of carriages and their parts, as well as their ornamental decoration.

NIGHT CLASS IN DRAWING AND DESIGNING.

MR. ERNEST GILLIES and MR. B. PALLADINO, Instructors. Pupils on roll, 42. The branches pursued are Constructive Design for Cabinet-Makers and others, and Free-hand Ornaments for Architects and Decorators.

AFTERNOON CLASS IN TEMPERA-DECORATION (*for Women*).

MR. W. OSTRANDER, Instructor. Pupils on roll, 15. This class is intended for the benefit of ladies, amateurs and students. The course includes lessons in drawing from the flat, from the cast, in the use of tempera or body-color, in artistic decoration of leather, silk, satin, glass, etc., and the use of oil and water-colors in preparing designs for industrial ornamentation. Particular attention is paid to the composition of designs for wall-papers, carpets, etc., and for cards and vignettes in color.

A night-class in Fresco and Ornament which is projected, has been postponed on account of the unusual pressure of business in that employment, which has forbidden the attendance of pupils.

An expense of about \$500 was necessary in repairs and fitting, before opening the rooms in Thirty-fourth Street, which are conveniently located, large, airy, and admirably adapted to the purpose. The schools were formally opened on the evening of October 3rd, 1881.

In the last Annual Report, Members were informed that the

Legislature had passed a bill authorizing the expenditure by the Department of Public Parks, of \$240,000 in sums of \$60,000 each, to be placed in the tax-levy for four successive years, the money to be applied to the extension of the building. The bill was, at the date of the report, in the hands of the Governor. It failed to receive his approval; but another bill, authorizing the expenditure of \$60,000, to be placed in the tax-levy of 1881, was passed and became a law with the approval of the Governor. The Board of Apportionment declined to place the amount in the tax-levy and the act is no longer operative. Meantime, the acquisitions of the Museum have been so great that the building is more than ever insufficient for their exhibition. A part of the large, basement-hall has been added to the exhibition-rooms; but there is still far from sufficient space for the objects belonging to the Museum, unless we abandon the loan-collection, so far as it includes any objects other than paintings.

The Loan-collection has continued to be a highly valuable part of our exhibitions; and the thanks of the Members are due to those who have so kindly allowed their paintings, sculptures and other art-objects to be placed in our cases and on our walls.

The Museum enters on the year 1882 in a condition unexampled in its brief history, and with reasonable anticipations of future increase in that which constitutes our wealth, the means of instructing the people. The cordial co-operation of the Members of this institution, their generous gifts of money and objects of art, their united labors have created a Museum which has already made visible its good influence on the education, taste, industries and commerce of the country.

We have accomplished very much in ten years of exhibitions, and have confidence that the institution we have founded will in the times to come, accomplish vastly more, and that in the good work following their labor and sacrifices, the Members of the Museum will be abundantly rewarded.

By order,
JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSTON,
President.

L. P. DI CESNOLA,
Secretary.
January 16th, 1882.